

Kyodan

Kyodan News Letter

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN

CHRISTIAN CENTER

2,4 CHOME, GINZA, CHUO KU, TOKYO, JAPAN

Cable Address Japankyodan Tokyo Telephone 561:6131

No. 7

September 20, 1966

THE MODERATOR SPEAKS -- THE 25 YEAR HISTORY OF THE KYODAN

Many times our guests from overseas, after spending some time looking at the Kyodan, come to us with the following question, "What has the Kyodan been doing these 25 years?" This question most certainly arises from the expectation held that the Kyodan is a mature church. As a matter of fact the Kyodan was organized rather hastily, due to the pressures of World War II, so suddenly was it organized that the important step 'preparation for unity' had to be by-passed. Therefore, many of the problems that should have been resolved before unity became immediate problems for the Kyodan after unification. It is apparent that during this 25 year span the Kyodan has devoted its heart and soul to the settling of its inner problems and to the seeking and preparing for unity within itself. In this sense, these 25 years have been a time of struggle and real self-examination by the Kyodan in order to become a true church.

Today, the Kyodan stands at the cross road. Our General Assembly being held this year commemorates the history of the Kyodan; recognizes that, even at the present stage, the Kyodan has acquired a definite outlook as to a united church; believes Divine Providence has been our guide these 25 years; knows that the Kyodan will respond to the Lord's Commission for us.

As we look to the future our theme is simply 'Our Church Tomorrow' which certainly indicates that we feel this is a historic time for us in the United Church of Christ in Japan.

We are concerned about three areas of our growth and these I want to share with you. They are Independence, Consolidation, and Extension.

- Independence

When we speak of independence we do mean in the use of cooperative funds the Kyodan receives from churches abroad. Our aim is to decrease both the request for such funds to decrease the amounts received. However, the financial aspect does not complete the total picture of independence. It also means that the Kyodan, which has been fostered through the evangelistic outreach of churches overseas for the past century, offers its deep appreciation to God for this and takes the attitude that we must as an autonomous body take the responsibility of the proclamation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Kyodan should cease depending upon overseas churches to do and provide the things that the Kyodan, itself, has strength to do and provide, although our desire is to carry forth a cooperative program of mission with overseas churches.

To enable us to take this step we are endeavoring to build within the Kyodan a program of 'Stewardship.'

- Consolidation

The Kyodan has been abundantly blessed in various respects. However, one of our weak points is how to coordinate and use these gifts as an evangelistic force. At the forthcoming General Assembly a Kyodan Structure Reorganization Committee will be commissioned to study the Kyodan and to present to the General Assembly two years hence a coordinated and workable plan of reorganization. We also need to strengthen the executive power of the church. The Kyodan strongly desires to present a united and a consolidated program of mission.

- Extension

As pointed out before the Kyodan has in the 25 years expended much energy in the resolving of inner problems. Not only the Kyodan organization but each of the local churches within this structure has had its own problems to deal with thus preventing us from reaching out, in a manner expected, to proclaim the Word.

It is our hope and prayer that today midst the critical problems of Japanese society and in our modern world that we, the Kyodan, in the Body of Christ firmly believing in the sovereignty of Jesus Christ in history will be of service to this world and that we shall be able to carry forth an active and positive evangelistic proclamation of the Gospel.

25TH ANNIVERSARY WORSHIP
SERVICE

The 25th Anniversary Worship Service of the United Church of Christ in Japan will be held on Sunday, October 23rd, at the Osaka Girls School in Osaka, Japan.

The speaker for this occasion will be Dr. D. T. Niles of Ceylon. The Kyodan has invited Dr. Niles specifically to come to Japan and speak as an Asian to Asians concerning the important matter of world mission. His sermon topic, "The Responsibility of the Asian Church in World Mission," is extremely timely for the Kyodan as it endeavors to fulfill the task for which it was called.

Since the announcement has been made that Dr. Niles is to be the Assembly speaker there has arisen a keen sense of anticipation and expectancy throughout the whole of the Kyodan.

The Kyodan asks that her sister churches around the world join her in prayers of thanksgiving to God for the past 25 years. As we pray together and for each other it is the Kyodan's deepest desire that together we shall continue to build His Kingdom.

A NEW BOOK - MIKIO SUMIYA'S
"TOYOHICO KAGAWA"

Mr. Mikio Sumiya, author of the new and exciting Toyohiko Kagawa biography, is at present serving as dean of the Economic Department of Tokyo University. Mr. Sumiya is not only recognized as an authority in the field of Industrial Economics and Labor Economics but he is also recognized as a faithful Christian, a member of the Kyodan. He presently serves on the Kyodan Executive Committee, the Kyodan Evangelism Committee and in particular has given special guidance to the Occupational Evangelism Committee. This service has grown out of Mr. Sumiya's special interest in evangelism to the laborer, the type of evangelism that has long been a blind spot in the evangelistic program of Japan. Mr. Sumiya is the author of many books among them being "FORMATION OF MODERN JAPAN AND CHRISTIANITY" and "JAPANESE SOCIETY AND CHRISTIANITY."

Although there have been many biographies and articles published concerning Dr. Kagawa, written mainly by his disciples, there have been few presentations on the evaluation of Kagawa as a man in history.

This book on Kagawa by Sumiya has attracted wide attention as he, for the first time, clarifies the significant pioneering role played by Kagawa in the social movements of laborers and farmers.

In the book Kagawa is shown in his well-known role as an evangelist to the masses but also is shown Kagawa living in slums, befriending the poor, encouraging these people to move out and take their rightful place in society.

Sumiya concludes his book with the statement, "No one can deny that Toyohiko Kagawa is a man of unique character both in modern history and in the Christian society of Japan."

We are grateful for this new picture of Kagawa as painted by Sumiya. An English edition of this book is desired and expected so that the people overseas who knew of Kagawa can share in this experience.

RESISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

At the 51st regular session of the Diet the Japanese Government passed a bill revising the existing legal holidays law. As a result of this resolution the following two new holidays were added:

- 1) September 15 - Respect for the Aged Day
Object: To respect the aged who have long served society and to congratulate them on their longevity.
- 2) October 10 - Sports Day (Physical Education Day)
Object: To encourage the practice of sports in order to build a sound body and mind.

At the same Diet session a bill was presented to restore "National Foundation Day" (Kigensetsu). This day had been set aside in pre-war days on February 11th. This bill has been presented to Diet sessions off and on since 1946, however, it has never been passed. It is apparent that there are deep rooted opposing powers on this issue.

The supporters insist upon the establishing of this day in order to nurture patriotism among the people, one reason given is that just as each person has and celebrates a birthday so should a nation.

The objectors urge that the bill be abandoned since there is a strong possibility of a revival of militarism on the Feb. 11th date, the former National Foundation Day, if it is designated as the new National Foundation Day. A revival of militarism would have great effect on this and succeeding generations, especially in the area of education. It would also be a threat to the desire for peace which is guaranteed in Article 9; the liberty of faith expressed in Art. 20; and as Feb. 11th is already a festival of Shinto, the freedom of thought and conscience written in Art. 19 would be endangered.

The Kyodan has expressed strong opposition to this bill, the Moderator has sent a letter of protest to Premier Sato.

** The next issue of the Kyodan News will be published about one week later than usual to allow us to send you news directly from the 25th Anniversary General Assembly being held in Osaka, October 21-26, 1966.**

